THE

SOCIAL ASPECT OF SAIVA SIDDHANTA

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED

BY

Pandit R. S. VEDACHALAM

of Madras Christian College,

AT THE FOURTH

SAIVA SIDDHANTA CONFERENCE

held at Trichinopoly

on the 29th, 30th and 31st of December, 1909.

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The Saiva Siddhanta Conference.

> That Love and God are two the ignorant say,
> That Love itself is God no one knoweth,
> That Love itself is God after any one hath known,
> He becometh one with Love, one with God.
>
> :—Saint Tirumular.

1. The Religion of Saiva Siddhanta leads to an ultimate recognition of the identity of Love and Sivam. Though the term Sivam has lost its valuable meaning at least in the conception of ordinary people by being mixed up with the mythology of Aryan settlers, yet it preserves it in the religious literature of the Tamil language. In Tamil it lends no room to religious differences but unifies the truths of all religions.

2. The Ethics of Siddhanta realises the salvation of man in the eternal love of Brotherhood. This Love is attained only when all distinctions of caste, colour, sex and race are entirely discarded, only when all Beings human and animal are sincerely treated with supreme kindness.

3. The Philosophy of Siddhanta believes in the existence of God, Soul and Matter—the three eternal entities substantially distinct but inseparably bound up everlastingly—whose incomprehensible union is neither one nor two but a kind of *not two* called *adwaita*; the sense of this adwaita of course is not *one* as is used by quasi-Vedanta but is *not two* as its two constituents *Na Dwaita* clearly indicate.

God is one but has two aspects of which one is personal and the other is impersonal. It is all intelligence, all power and all grace.

Souls are numerous, each having a distinct and eternal individuality. Their sentient nature, as a whole, is such as can reflect only that which is in immediate contact with it. This its nature is likened to the nature of a crystal. Primarily they are bound up by a dark principle called *malam*. To release them from this bondage of malam and set one with God is the purpose of creation. To effect this liberation from malam and union with God *Hatha*, *Raja*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti* yoga-practices are ordained as absolutely necessary for the souls.

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Social Aspect of Saiva Siddhanta.

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How far the religion and philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta lend a permanent support to the social progress of humanity at large, how far they help to refine and ennoble the extreme views of the present day Social Reformers, forms the theme of my humble lecture. This very important connection of Saiva Siddhanta with social reform would seem to possess an inestimable value to all who take a right view of things as they are and endeavour to render substantial help to all the suffering souls whether they belong to human existence or to the lower animal kingdom. Taking no account of our present needs and requirements, it would not do to say with some of our philosophers that this world and all its contents are the veriest outcome of a sourceless nothing, a mere transitory and unreal shadow of an ever abiding entity, or the fleeting phantasms of a disordered brain; it would not do to say with some of our extreme Idealists that we the individual souls and all other sentient beings are so many sparks emitted by the blazing Divine fire, or else the hewn out fragments of one indivisible whole; it would not do to say with others of that class that we are that one pure, effulgent and indivisible spirit which involved itself in ignorance and illusion by losing sight of its own real nature and identifying itself with the unreal principle of the so called Maya; and it would not do to say with the quasi-Vedantists that all kinds of knowledge we possess regarding ourselves and all our surroundings are false and deceptive except the one supreme knowledge which is absolute, self-existent, eternal and immutable. No doubt it is all very nice to indulge ourselves in such an imaginative flight as this beyond the immediate realities of our experience and objective knowledge, but this momentary elevation of mind, though airy and unsubstantial, gets itself after all weighed down to this earth by the necessities of our mundane existance. No philosopher, however idealistic he may be, can overlook the duties he has to perform in this earthly life; no philosopher, however enthusiastic he may be in expounding his favourite theory of illusion, can withstand the formidable attack of misery, poverty and disease. He cannot feel himself satiated to the full while he is actually suffering from want

of food, nor can he say that he is absolutely well while he is writhing under a gnawing stomach pain. Thus, the certainty of this life is forced inevitably upon all whether they are willing to accept it or not. But strange it is that the very persons who uphold the theory of illusion or the unreality of the world are those who are foremost in multiplying ceremonies and endless varieties of rites which they want us every day to observe; strange it is that the very teachers who try their utmost to prove the unity of things are those who create interminable distinctions of caste, are those who hinder most heartlessly all our efforts to become united; and strange also it is that those who declare that there is only one being devoid of all rank and grade are the very people who cringe and crawl before the rich and stalk with scorn and disdain before the poor. What means all this? Is what they speak most eloquently in consonance with what they do? Do they display all the splendours of their speech in the actions of their daily life? No, certainly not. We are even struck with wonder at some times and dislike at others when we see before our eyes the very same Idealists who spoke about the unreality of the world working hard with unabated greed and ambition to accumulate money either by foul means or fair. We sink under despair at their philosophy and disbelief in their words. We crave for a better and correct understanding of our life-struggles and its actual state. At this point of utter hopelessness and perplexity there comes in for our aid and enlightenment the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta—the unique system of thought that embodies in itself in a cogent and systematic manner all the ripest and the wisest thoughts of ancient Indian Sages on the puzzling problems of man's destiny and his environment.

When viewed from the standpoint of Saiva Siddhanta, what the nature of man and his relations to other beings offer for our deepest considerations, constitutes as tangible a reality as anything that we are really conscious of. The world with its contents of numberless objects, the man with minute grades of intellectual advancement, the lower beings clothed in infinite variety of corporal forms—all are indisputably real and they move steadily towards a goal of perfection and ineffable bliss which is not more real than what they are at present. To Saiva Siddhanta whatever that exists is an actual fact, it being a self-evident truth that what does not exist cannot come into manifestation. The curious reduction of all things to one single force is a fictitious process of thought foreign to the logic of Saiva Siddhanta. Although thinkers of great capacity and acute intellect had most resolutely applied their methods of reasoning and investigation to the tracing of everything to one primal source, yet their efforts availed them little to explain the exact way in which these different objects of experience took their rise from one common undifferentiated unit. The mere

assertion that so many things came out from one common source does not in the least exhaust the explanation of things. On the other hand you are required to account for the actual differences that exist as has been well insisted on by Dr. Pringle Pattison in his excellent Essay on 'Man's Place in the Cosmos.' He says: "The preceding set of facts, which we treat as the cause or sufficient explanation of the phenomenon in question, is ex-hypothesi different from the phenomenon it is said to explain; and the difference is that it consists of simpler elements. To explain, according to this view, is to reduce to simpler conditions. But if the elements are really simpler, there is the fact of their combination into a more complex product to be explained, and the fact of their combination in such a way as to produce precisely the result in question. And if we choose to take the antecedent conditions, as they appear in themselves, apart from the all important circumstance of the production of this effect, we have, no doubt, a 'preceding set of facts,' but we certainly have not, in any true sense, the cause of the phenomenon. We have eliminated the very characteristic we set out to explain—namely, the difference of the new phenomenon from the antecedents out of which it appears to have been evolved." What this wise Scotish philosopher has said of the explanation of things exactly tallies with the argument of Saiva Siddhanta. For, in Saiva Siddhanta every thing is taken to be as real as its cause and is not summarily explained away as is usually done by the Idealists; in Saiva Siddhanta each and every substance is traced to its real antecedent cause in all consistency with our experience and observation of facts and not blindly reduced to one imagined force. Turn whithersoever you choose, do you not see there in an immeasurable scale not only the difference in form, colour, size and shape of things but also the difference in the degrees of intelligence which the lives of all individual beings manifest? Turn to whichever human community you may like, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, do you not see there pain and suffering, likes and dislikes, disease and despair hanging heavily over the hearts of every one? From its very inmost core does not the human heart crave for a remedy that would cure man of his age-persisting evil? Does it not crave for a balm that would heal the wound cut deeply into it? While such a strong instinctive desire is ever burning in the heart of every person, is it at all possible to extinguish it with the feeble theory of illusion or oneness of things? Instead of attempting to understand our real position in the struggles of life and trying our best to remove the evils and misery that maintain an unyielding stand, it is of no use to talk glibly of every thing as unreal or one and boast ourselves as stainless and sinless spirit of bright and pure intelligence.

What reasons have we to say that the things we take cognisance of are unreal? Do they not affect us in a peculiar manner and produce in us the

knowledge of their immediate presence? Is there any instance in which an unreal thing, if thing that can be called, is found to affect us in the same way in which a thing that really exists does? No, there is not. Here, of course, I am not unaware of such famous examples as the rope-snake, the sky-lotus, the mirage and others often resorted to by our Indian Idealists in support of their sophistic reasoning, but I am sorry to note that they lose sight of the important conditions under which such misconceptions arise. Let us take one of these examples, as the rope-snake. On an obscure or rather a little dark evening a traveller going along a narrow path that lies in the midst of a wilderness, suddenly comes across a thing that most resembles a snake and gets himself at once terrified at it. But after a few moments recovering his presence of mind he finds it to be after all only a piece of rope; in this occurrence has not the false thing affected the traveller so much? No; it is not the false thing but the erroneous notion into which he had fallen by the association of certain ideas which arose in quick succession at that moment, that terrified him all on a sudden. Previous to this occurrence the traveller should have been in full possession of the conception of a snake, particularly its shape, its biting habit, its poison, the result which that poison, if mixed in blood, would produce in a living body and of its usual habitations as forest and others. Without this group of ideas deeply impressed upon his memory, no such terror is likely to be caused in him. Now, see how all these ideas should have rushed forth into his mind at the sight of that piece of rope which presented to his view so marked a resemblance to a snake. His fear of snakes which is but quite natural at a time as a dim evening and in such a place as a dense forest fastened upon him as soon as he saw the rope and obscured his understanding. From this it ought to be clear to you that it is not the false thing, for no false thing can affect a man in the least degree, but the existing notion of a poisonous snake having been induced by means of a piece of rope excited in him such great terror. Had he paused a while before giving himself up to fear, he would not have gone wrong in his judgment. This psychological analysis of an erroneous notion would be sufficient to prove that nothing but what really exists can enter into the conception of man and that nothing in the world can be predicated of as illusory or unreal.

Again, let me ask how far are we justified in calling ourselves as a sinless spirit of pure intelligence in face of all recognised facts? If we are that one, pure and self-shining intelligence, how is that that we forget all we did a few days ago? how is that that we are not able to know now, all that is going on all around us and all around the universe? how is that that we are in utter darkness with regard to our own future destiny,

with regard to the happenings of the morrow? If we are that sinless spirit, the Brahman of supreme bliss, how is that that we toil night and day for the earning of bare necessaries? how is that that we suffer from numerous forms of disease? and how is that that we lament the bereavement of our dear ones and mourn over the final separation of our kith and kin? Tell me if all these are mere fiction, mere imaginings in which the pure spirit exults. Ah! you dare not, you will not say that, although you may have an inclination to support it being brought up by your elders in that line of thought.

Well, then, the position of Saiva Siddhanta is, as you now see, quite unquestionable, since it takes the facts of our life as they are and proceeds therefrom to solve the ultimate problems of man's evolution. Now, it remains for us to see how the religion and philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta promise us, the despairing souls, the hope of redemption from the iron-clutch of misery and evil, and how they open up before us new ways of social amelioration. As a matter of course the redemption of man and his social progress are so intimately related to each other that one may be taken as cotemporaneous with the other, that one advances side by side with the other, that one cannot take place without being accompanied by the other at the same time and in the same place.

At the root of all misery and evil lies the dark limiting element called Anava; so says the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta. Very difficult it is to find an equivalent term to Anava in the whole range of the English language. It represents the entire group of evil qualities such as ignorance, selfishness, self-conceit, pride, arrogance, anger, animal passions and so on. At the present stage of evolution except a few liberated souls, almost all the living beings whether human or animal are one with this Anava the embodiment of all evils. The ultimate purpose of evolution is to bring about an eternal separation between the evils and individual selves and this purpose is, I dare say, nearing its accomplishment in man, for, here alone, has come to exist the freest scope for strenuous individual work ever stimulated by supreme reasoning powers. In other organisms but that of man there does not seem to exist the full exercise of reason and free-will and hence it is not possible for the beings that live in them to extricate themselves from the powerful hold of ignorance and evil, until they climb up the highest rung in the ladder of organic development assisted all along by the law of evolution. Man has at his disposal all that he wishes for and all the requisite powers to turn them to good or bad account according as he chooses. Such is the sterling excellence of the human body and such is the usefulness of its complex structure. But alas! it is a pity that man should ignore the usefulness of his birth by plunging himself headlong into the abyss of such evil and

pernicious actions as killing, drinking, indulging in animal passions and so on! It is a pity that he should ignore the cultivation of his understanding, of his inner moral instincts and of his sympathetic feeling called up every instant by the sufferings of his beloved ones! It is a pity that he should overlook the supreme pleasure ever springing up from an interior corner of his heart when he has done a benevolent action and meditates upon the virture of it! It is a pity that even the vast extent of modern university learning instead of opening up to his mental view new vistas of glorious spiritual realms] and unlocking the treasures of his latent life powers, only serves to blunt the edge of his instinct and reason, only serves to lead him into gross materialism or into a far more dangerous Idealism! And it is a pity that even the few solid remnants left behind the evaporating educated community should be carried away by incorrect religious teachings most eloquently disseminated by certain misinformed persons! Ah! This body of ours is like a narrow bridge which crosses over a bottomless pit of perdition ever yawning to swallow up the week souls who slip their steps, but which leads up to a region of great comfort and happiness the cautious few treading on it with firm steps and a fearless heart. Or it may be taken as a middle plane from which you may either fall down to dreadful lower regions of intense darkness and be lost for ever, or soar high up into the realms of glory and resplendence until you are embraced there by the awaiting hands of great Devas. Yet for this soaring up of the soul a certain airiness of form is the prime requisite needed to it at all events. You all know pretty well that heaviness of substances tends them to fall down to the earth, while their lightness makes them fly aloft. That things of like nature attract one another is also a well known dictum which is not more true anywhere else than in this case. The more you think of this world, of its relations and of its differences, the more you become tied down to it, inasmuch as the thing which you meditate upon is gross and material and as it by reason of its being approximate to your thought makes you also gross and heavy incapacitating you for higher, purer, nobler and lighter works.

All of us, nay even every being that has life in it, have that peculiarity of mind which reflects in itself to a greater or less degree the nature and characteristics of those things that are nearer to it. This inborn faculty for reflection becomes one of imitation in proportion as the living beings ascend in the scale of evolutionary process. In this power for imitation does consist all the vigorous and wonderful growth of the human mind. Aristotle the great metaphysician of Greece, in considering this power for imitation as constituting the prominent factor in the development of human mind goes on to say in his profound treatise on Poetics, "To imitate is in-

stinctive in man from his infancy. By this he is distinguished from other animals, that he is of all the most imitative, and through this instinct receives his earliest education. All men likewise naturally receive pleasure from imitation. This is evident from what we experience in viewing the works of imitative art, for in them we contemplate with pleasure, and with the more pleasure the more exactly they are imitated." What is called in the psychology of Saiva Siddhanta as the Soul's nature of becoming one with what it associates itself is, more or less, the same as the Aristotelian doctrine of imitation. In this important psychological fact we have a clue to trace the otherwise untraceable mystic character of the human mind and a key to solve the intricate problem of its future course. The progression or retrogression of soul's inner knowledge depends upon the extent of its aptitude for imitating or reflecting the character of things that are close to it. If its capacity to reflect in its consciousness the evil nature of proximate things be great, its retrogression would be as sure and rapid as its progression would be by its imitation of their good qualities. For, have we not seen some of our boys and girls becoming rogues and vagabonds by their being allowed to mix themselves freely with people of low and degraded type, while others turn out to be great and philanthropic by their association with men of learning and virtue? Have we not seen people becoming deeply imbued with wrong ideas simply because they are instilled into their mind by those who are closely related to them? Have we not seen the religious fanatics inflamed by the erroneous notions of their teachers committing murders and other diabolic crimes in the name of religion, in the name of all-merciful God? Have we not seen, on the other hand, certain persons becoming mild and peaceful do benevolent deeds inspired, of course, by similiar actions set as models in the lives of some great men? Do not these frequent occurrences illustrate the imitative habit of all living beings which stands so prominently in the psychological study of Saiva Siddhanta? From these and other similar instances do we not understand that we possess a peculiar faculty for imitating either the evil or the good character of those with whom we are in immediate contact? Now you see that it is in your power while you are in this human mortal clay to choose either of the two as has been shown to you once before. Now you also see for yourself that there is in you a something which is independent either of virtue or of vice and which is ready at your bidding to drive your activities either the one way or the other. This something is what is termed as free-will. Free-will is the starting point of all your activities. Before you come to any determination of your conduct, before you go by this way or that, before you reflect upon the worth or worthlessness of a scheme your free-will remains unaffected by anything outside of yourself.

At this critical point—a point from which you just begin to start on your journey, from which your energies come into actual play and flow into one particular channel, the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta comes to your aid and exhorts you to pursue the course which will lead you to perpetual good and universel love, for the sake of disentangling yourself from the wild and stern grasp of ignorance and evil. For an instant you may have an inclination to take the way thus pointed out to you but your life-long attachment to iniquity exerts such a powerful influence over you that instead of moving a step forward in the path of virtue, you turn round and go back the way of all sin and mischief. As soon as you rise above on the wings of new interest to fly into the region of purity and goodness, you find yourself most hopelessly dragged down to the mire of malefic passions. If this be the case with all of us, how are we to surmount these difficulties? how are we to attain the final happiness which, we believe, is in store for us as the ultimate consequence of the evolutionary procesess?

Here, again, steps in the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta with a strong timely advice. It wants you to put down the self which is an unsympathetic consciousness of one's own interest and which is the necessary antecedent of all evil thoughts and all evil actions; it wants you to uproot everything that tends to bring into your consciousness the infinite differences that exist, narrowing the horizon of your mental vision and making you yield to the influence of matter; and it wants you, in short, to treat in utter disregard all distinctions that manifest themselves in caste, creed, colour and sex. Perhaps, many of you may like to interrupt me, here, with the question why is it that Saiva Siddhanta wants us to overlook these differences while they actually prevail? This let me proceed to answer.

It is so plain that I need hardly say that differences come into existence only when invisible and intangible matter assumes forms and shapes limited by space and time, and that in consequence they are, of necessity, the outcome of space and time limitations. So long as these differences continue to be brought into our mind, we can never hope to possess one coherence of thought and emerge from the dire imperfection which binds us all to pain and poverty. Why? Because when you confine your attention to one particular thing, say to a tower of some yonder church, you for the time being become one with that object losing consciousness of all surrounding things and remain in total ignorance as to what is going on all around you. Again when you shift your view to the full moon shining with a queenly beauty and glorious lustre in some clear blue sky, you look at it with an all absorbing attention losing conception of the tower and

other things and for a moment identifying yourself with the moon before you. And so on you change your attention from one substance to another, every instant becoming one with what you conceive of and every instant limiting your thought as if it were a coarse form of matter confined within space and time. What is the result of this limited knowledge of things? Since you forget everything besides what occupies your immediate attention, you are made liable to commit a numberless variety of mistakes and to suffer in consequence from poverty, disease, and cares; your mind too becomes successively clouded with the sweeping multiplicity of images formed of gross material stuff. From this it is manifest that recognition of things in their widely diversified separateness, or, to put it in other words, the cognisance of interminable differences in objects simply disturbs the calmness of our mind and leaves it in a highly ruffled and agitated condition. Such is the grand result which we obtain by our knowledge of distinctions, by our knowledge of both objective and subjective differences! Well, is this desirable? no, not at all. On the contrary, it is our oft-repeated desire to free ourselves from this differentiating process of mind seeing that it invariably impels one to involve himself in the gloom of ignorance and grief, seeing that it regenerates fresh and anew the self and its accompanying evil passions otherwise eaten up by the evolutionary process, seeing that it retards the progress of our intellect, encircles its expanding power and nails it down to mischief and iniquity.

Sad to relate although this differentiating process of mind might be weakened very easily in certain important respects where it could not be deemed as harmful, yet it springs up luxuriantly with tenfold vigour and youthful freshness in such insignificant areas as of caste, creed, colour and sex and resists all our attempts to eradicate it entirely from our thoughts! Well, what is that that lends to it such a stern and strong support as to make it offer us so unyielding a resistance? It is that self, the unsympathetic consciousness of one's own interest as has been already explained to you. How this inspirits the mind's differentiating property with so much strength and vigour, we shall find most vividly illustrated in the cases of caste, creed, colour and sex.

First, let us take the case of caste. One man thinks since he is born of a caste much superior to that of another, he is perfectly justified in laying claim to certain best things in the world and also to the obedience of all people lower than himself. This deceptive imagination regarding one's own superiority leads him to isolate himself mentally from other people and makes him think so highly of himself and so lowly of others that whenever a man happens to go against his wish, against his sense of self-esteem, he

hates him bitterly and seeks for an earliest opportunity to wreak his vengeance upon him. See how this feeling of self-esteem brings into play the self—the root of all evils, the spring of all animal passions ; see how it sows all kinds of differences amongst us who are the children of one great Heavenly Father and Divine Mother ; see how it retards the progress of social unity and breaks asunder the chord of Divine Love which would otherwise have bound us all into one inseparable union.

Next take the case of creed. It presents so great a variety of differences that it seems hopelessly impossible to attempt at any reconciliation between any two of them. Every one has his own creed, has his own favourite theory, has his own peculiar form of religion. Every one perseveres with undiminished zeal to make his own creed the only accepted thing of all, his own religion the only best and pre-eminent of all. One is not willing to accept the dogma of another person, however convincing it may seem to his reason. What an amusing spectacle do they present to the passers-by when two persons are engaged in a vehement contest for establishing each his own theory as the best of all ! Apart from these individual doctrines, do we not find even great religions that pride themselves on having millions of adherents who share in a common belief, diverging into numerous main divisions and innumerous sub-divisions ? Do we not find the followers of one particular form of religion picking holes in the cults of other people, while the opposite party repeats the same thing in retaliation ? Do we not read in the pages of world's ancient history that great multitudes of people had spilt their blood, had massacred their fellow-beings and ravaged their towns in the name of religion, in the name of all-merciful God ? What is that which underlay the cover of such seemingly peaceful religion but which every now and then pounced upon the mild and gentle people who approached them to snatch a moment's rest but were killed and devoured by them most unexpectedly ? It is nothing but that terrible self—the abominable combination of all evil qualities ; it is nothing but that dreadful poison which eats not only into the vital parts of the being from which it arose but also the whole organic structure of the vast human constitution which remains in closest contact with it.

And lastly we have to consider the differences which colour and sex have brought into existence. In point of fact all the political and national troubles are the result of unusual importance attached to colour distinctions, all the social, moral and intellectual degradation to which the whole of our Indian nation is subject and from which it seeks to emerge is due to the very low opinion entertained of the female sex by the arrogant male. You think that just because you happened to possess a fair complexion and a

male body, you are far higher than a man of ugly complexion and a person of opposite sex. You think that you are justified in claiming homage from the ugly man and servitude from the woman, and look to your own comfort and enjoyment at the expense of the little they have. Here, too, you see that the self is the dominant factor at work in causing untold miseries to fall upon the heads of humanity.

Now in all these instances the fact is plainly seen that the malignant part of our soul is the only thing which is ever active in splitting up the whole corporate body of mankind into minute parts of individual units, that it is the contracting element which is continually weakening us by narrowing our sympathy to an extremely limited area of life, and that it is the fertile source of all evils which gives birth to an unending cycle of births and deaths, pains and miseries, pangs and bereavements. What is social reform but our unceasing effort to uproot the self, the unsympathetic lookout of one's own individual interest? What is social reform but our unquenchable thirst after a free intercourse with our fellow beings, a free intermingling of our interests with those of others, and a willing participation in the troubles and anxieties of our companions? And what is social reform but our ever-recurring desire to effect a thorough purification of our souls, to release ourselves from the grasp of grief and ignorance, to reach the highest stage of mental serenity, luminous understanding, boundless love and infinite bliss?

But at the present day, I see, so far as my knowledge is concerned, that almost all the movements of social reform are carried on on purely physical considerations to the exclusion of all spiritual thoughts. If it were not the necessary accompaniment of the intellectual progress of sentient beings, the mere unerring process of cosmic evolution is blind and meaningless; if we were not individual spirits endued with intelligence and reason quite independently of all physical laws but a complex product of material atoms the movement of social reform is itself purposeless and a bare automaton. Unless they are considered from a spiritualistic point of view, the differences of caste, creed, colour and sex do not require to be taken into account, since they are purely physical things and have no connection with anything beyond themselves. Whether these distinctions will continue to exist or cease to exist, we need not have to brother ourselves, as it would be a simply fruitless endeavour to fight against a natural law when there is not a spirit transcending all physical objects and longing for an ultimate triumph over material order. Apart from the consideration of spiritual progress, the evolution of physical universe has not the least attraction for us. Apart from the intrinsic character of intelligent souls, all

the outward phenomena of nature and their wonderful complexity of structure do not possess even the lowest value of their own. Like a dead body containing no soul in it, like a diamond void of all lustre and gleam, like a flower having no colour and fragrance in it the study of physical law becomes useless and empty if it is not supplemented by the more important study of spiritual principles. And even so the social reform of modern times loses its value and interest in proportion as it overlooks the problems of spirit which constitute the pith and marrow of all reformatory movements.

But when you come to breathe the pure atmosphere of Saiva Siddhanta in which the true spirit of social reform diffuses itself, in which the study of physical laws mingles itself with the study of spiritual laws and in which alone each receives its own due share of attention, you perceive the difficulty with which the practical application of the reform proposals is beset and also begin to understand the correct lines of procedure only along which you can hope to accomplish your object in view. As has been already pointed out to you Saiva Siddhanta wants you to wipe away all distinctions of caste, creed, colour and sex by striking the self at the root and weeding it out entirely from your mind. But this extremely difficult task of exterminating the self cannot be achieved all in a moment and it, therefore, advises you to be ever on the alert to give it a mortal blow whenever it shows its head in any practical concern. Well, is it not still more difficult for the human beings to be ever on their guard to control themselves when they are subject to the ever-varying conditions of their environments? Certainly it is very difficult but here, too, Saiva Siddhanta affords you an easy means of success through which you can surmount all the obstacles of this life, through which your intellect will expand into an unlimited extent of supreme light, through which your ignorance and misery will melt and vanish away for ever, through which you will become one with the whole of humanity, one with all beings that have life, one with God the final resort and shelter of struggling souls. Well, what is that means; It is Love; Love pure and resplendent; Love infinite and Divine. In all that you do, in all that you think, and in all that you will, have this one ideal of Love ever before your mind, nay, have the one ideal of Love distinctly realised in your being. As has been sung by Saint Tirumular some fifteen centuries ago:

"That Love and God are two the ignorant say,
That Love itself is God no one knoweth,
That Love itself is God after any one hath known,
He becometh one with Love, one with God.

when you merge in Love, you become God as it were; when you view everything from the standpoint of Love, who is high? who is low? which religion is true? which is false? who is your friend and who is your enemy? No difference at all; all are equal; all are your kith and kin; all are yourself. Every thing is suffused with Love, everything is coloured by Love. When you bring yourself once under the benign influence of Love, your innate power for imitation renders it extremely easier for you to be infused with and interpenetrated by Love. A new glory of Light, a new glory of transcendent beauty, of indescribable bliss will open before your inner vision. Before that ocean of Divine Love and glorious Light no self-love can twinkle, no self-interest can prevail; all the faint outlines that divide mankind will disappear; neither the distinctions of caste nor the distinctions of religion, neither the dissimilarity of colour nor the difference of sex can obtrude themselves on the mind of those who are plunged in Love and filled with Love. The Social Reform mildly and considerately advocated by Saiva Siddhanta is based upon Love and the uprooting of self-interest and selfish motives. The social unity and the sweetest feelings of brotherhood that stand so prominently in the lives and career of Saints Tirujnanasambandha and Appar, and in the teachings of the great Indian reformer and philosopher Ramanuja are the gentler effluences of the purest Love for humanity and the richest outgrowth of the rarest belief in the ways of Providence. And in a word the whole social aspect of Saiva Siddhanta consists in the blending of Love and Reason in their utmost purity, boundless extent and ceaseless expansion; it consists in the recognition of the presence of all-merciful Sivam in all beings, in the identification of one's illuminated Soul with the universal human sympathy, with the overwhelming and incomparable light of Divine Love.